TOP SECRET

CABINET OFFICE CAB 163/53

1967

(This File must not go outside the Office.)

E 406

Date of Registration

10 Nov 1964

Rack 166

J

File Number

~~80~~ /199/2 Pt. I

Previous Reference

For Cross References see inside of Cover

Joint Intelligence Committee CAB 163/53.

AFRICA

Intelligence on LIBYA

Outlook & Threat to Libya

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
		D			

CLOSED 1968

Folio's 1 — 46

Dates 13.5.63 — 12.9.67

Continued in Pt. 2.

blkd & retd Mr Eades 19-12-68

PA 22-1-69

1969

1st Review 1972

Second Review 1994.

1972/2 Pt I

(8969) Wt. 25515/6107 2M 8/64 P.I, Gp. 610

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Other Files containing Matter Bearing on this Subject.

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First Review J 199|2 Pt Is II + III

This file has now passed out of active use. Under the Public Records Act 1958, it must be reviewed within five years to determine whether it should be destroyed or retained for departmental use.

This file should accordingly be -

~~a. destroyed on 31.12.19... or~~

b. retained for administrative purposes for 25 years from 1969

Signature ..... HEHudson
SIC

Date ..... 11 Jan 1972

Notes

1. Where the file has only short-term usefulness (ie extending to at most five years) it should be marked at (a) for destruction at a pre-determined time when it is judged likely to have ceased to be of any further use to the Department.

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C18.1.71

FOLIO 46.

SECURITY WARNINGS

1. **Category 'A' Cypher telegram. Paraphrase NOT required.**
2. **A telegram which contains a reference to any classified telegram or correspondence must itself be classified.**
3. **The Cabinet Office Communications Centre (Tel. No. WHI 5422 Ext. 196/197) must be consulted if it is desired to distribute or release this telegram, or any part of it, to a person or nation who would not normally be authorised to receive it.**

FROM:- WASHINGTON. DTG. N.F.T. 12.9.67.

TO:- JIC LONDON. TOR. 18.45. (GMT). 12.9.67.

TELNOM:- 2915 TO F.O.

DATED:- 12TH SEPTEMBER 1967.

IMMEDIATE.

199/2.

S E C R E T

FOR SECRETARY J.I.C. FROM SCOTT.

FOSTER'S LETTER OF 30 AUGUST TO ME: J.I.C. PAPER ON LIBYA.

YOU WILL HAVE SEEN WASHINGTON TELEGRAM NO. 2898 REPORTING STATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTIONS TO JIC(67)45. CIA HAVE NOW COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE 1. WE AGREE GENERALLY WITH THE MAJOR POLITICAL JUDGMENTS IN THIS PAPER. WE CONCUR WITH THE FINAL SENTENCE OF PARAGRAPH 13''.... IT WOULD SEEM UNLIKELY THAT THE EGYPTIANS WILL ATTEMPT TO MOUNT A COUP IN THE NEAR FUTURE, OR EVEN PERHAPS DURING THE KING'S LIFETIME," PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE, WHERE LIBYA AGREED TO PAY SUBSTANTIAL SUMS ANNUALLY TO HELP EGYPT IN ITS PRESENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

2. THE MAGNITUDE OF POSSIBLE EGYPTIAN MILITARY CAPABILITIES VIS-A-VIS LIBYA SEEMS ABOUT RIGHT, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT MADE SUCH A DETAILED STUDY AS WAS DONE FOR THIS PAPER. HOWEVER, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR ALGERIA TO INTERVENE MILITARILY IN WESTERN LIBYA THAN THIS PAPER SUGGESTS, PARTICULARLY SO LONG AS TUNISIA REFUSED TO GRANT TRANSIT TO ANY ALGERIAN FORCES (PARAGRAPH 33).

3. WE AGREE WITH THE ASSESSMENT ON LIBYA'S FUTURE FOLLOWING KING / IDRIS'S

(97771)

IDRIS'S ABDICATION OR DEATH, PARTICULARLY THE EMPHASIS PLACED ON THE REQUIREMENT FOR A REASONABLY STRONG GOVERNMENT AND SUPPORT FOR THE PRESENT CROWN PRINCE OF A FAIRLY BROAD GROUP OF POLITICAL FIGURES, IN ORDER TO INSURE A SMOOTH TRANSFER OF POWER. THE CROWN PRINCE HAS LITTLE POWER IN HIS OWN RIGHT.

4. THE NOTION IN PARAGRAPH 3Ø THAT ''FOUR DAYS WARNING CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED OF A SITUATION IN LIBYA WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A COUP D'ETAT'' STRIKES US AS UNWARRANTED. WHILE THERE MIGHT BE STIRRINGS AND TROUBLE WHICH COULD BE A WARNING OF A COUP, IT IS AT LEAST AS LIKELY THAT ONE WOULD OCCUR WITHOUT MUCH WARNING.

UNQUOTE.

DISTRIBUTION:- SEC JIC (6).
MR. EDES, FO FOR ACTION.
DISSEC FOR ADVANCE INFMN.

SECRET

FOLIO 42.

J 199/2.

30th August 1967

... I enclose a copy of JIC(67) 45 (Final), on Libya, which the Foreign Office ask should be passed to the United States State Department as the basis for future discussions about the respective British and American roles in Libya. I need not further elaborate about the purpose of the paper, which you will no doubt have seen from the latest JIC Meeting Minutes.

2. It may well be that some of CIA's copies will in any event find their way to the State Department but as we cannot always rely on this channel we usually make doubly sure, if Anglo-American discussions are ahead, by sending a copy direct.

3. Please would you hand this copy of the report over once Chancery's clearance has been obtained? *

JPF

(J.P. FOSTER)

* Since drafting this letter I have seen your clearance telegram. Please therefore go ahead.

K.B.A. Scott, Esq.,
British Embassy,
Washington.

...

E.R.

J 199/2

SECRET

CABINET OFFICE
A 9191
30 AUG 1967
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

FOLIO 41.

MR. REID

40a.

I attach Sir Burke Trend's copy of JIC(67)45 (Final) - "The Internal and External Threats to Libya up to the end of 1968".

2. This report has been prepared as the intelligence background to a review of British intervention planning being undertaken by the Chiefs of Staff and to forthcoming Anglo-U.S. discussions on Libya. The report concludes inter alia that the Libyan Government machine, fragile though it is, should be able to maintain authority during the period under review unless subjected to a major internal crisis comparable to that which occurred during the Arab-Israel war, in which event the loyalty and effectiveness of the security forces could not be taken for granted. Conclusions (g) to (o), dealing with the UAR, Algerian, British, American and Soviet positions perhaps warrant reading in full.

3. I recommend that I be authorised to pass this report to the Prime Minister and to the Foreign, Defence and Commonwealth Secretaries.

Brooks Richards

30th August 1967

(F.B. RICHARDS)

Mr Richards

I agree.

JIC Clerks.

Pl. distribute as authorised.

31/8

Actioned 31/8/67 by GA

EPA O/C.

33

(THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT)

JIC 727/66

COPY NO. 55

UK EYES ONLY

199/2.

CABINET

JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA UP TO THE END OF 1967

(Previous Reference: JIC 712/66)

Note by the Secretary

Attached at Annex is a JIC Note in amplification of JIC(66) 15 (Final), "The Internal and External Threats to Libya up to the End of 1967".

2. The Note has been prepared in response to the following question posed by the Defence Planning Staff (DPS 1147/16/8/66 of 16th August, 1966) -

"Is four days a reasonable warning time to assume for the type of UAR attack on Libya suggested in paragraph 24 of JIC(66) 15?"

(Signed) J.P. FOSTER

for Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

24th August, 1966.

DISTRIBUTION

DPS Secretariat (3 copies)
JIC
JIS ('B' Team)

Annex to JIC 727/66

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA

Note by the Joint Intelligence Committee

The situation in Libya is likely to remain stable so long as King Idris remains in control of affairs, which we expect him to do so long as he remains in good health. Should the King die or become seriously ill, there is a reasonable chance of an orderly succession. Nevertheless the situation could deteriorate as a result of misgivings about the personal qualities of the Crown Prince and pro-Republican feelings prevalent in certain quarters. However such deterioration is not likely to progress to the extent of making a coup d'etat possible in four days. An adequate degree of warning of internal dissatisfaction can therefore be expected, but such a situation could persist for a considerable period without a rebellion.

3. Once the situation had deteriorated, no warning could be counted on of the start of a coup d'etat. Should a rising take place and its leaders appeal for Egyptian support, it is unlikely that the UAR would respond immediately. They would wish to assess the chances of its suppression by CYDEF, or the Army, and the likely reaction of the British Government. They could be expected however to put in hand preliminary military preparations for intervention, which we would probably not be able to detect.

4. Should a rising be purely internal it might well take the Egyptians four days before they could take a decision whether to intervene. However if they had foreknowledge of it, or a fortiori if they had inspired and organised it, they might be able to come to a decision more quickly, though they would still wish to see the extent to which it was supported, by the Libyan Army and to calculate the attitude of CYDEF and the British Government.

4. Once the Egyptians had decided to intervene, the first phase of an attack could develop within twenty-four to thirty-six hours as outlined in paragraph 24 of JIC(66) 15.

5. We therefore conclude -

(a) at least four days' warning can be expected of a situation in Libya which might lead to a coup d'etat but such a situation could persist for a considerable period without a rising taking place;

(b) once the situation had worsened, no warning could be counted on of the start of a coup d'etat;

(c) once a coup had taken place, the Egyptians would need time to assess its chances of success before deciding to intervene. But this period could conceivably be less than four days if they had foreknowledge or had themselves inspired and organised the rising.

SECRET

32

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JIC 712/66

COPY NO. 55

UK EYES ONLY

CABINET

JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

199/2

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA UP TO THE END OF 1967
(Previous Reference: JIC(66) 15)

Note by the Secretary

Attached at Annex is a draft JIC Note prepared by the Joint Intelligence Staff ('B' Team) in amplification of JIC(66) 15 (Final), "The Internal and External Threats to Libya up to the End of 1967".

2. The draft has been prepared as a matter of urgency in response to the following question posed by the Defence Planning Staff (DPS 1147/16/8/66 of 16th August 1966):-

"Is four days a reasonable warning time to assume for the type of UAR attack on Libya suggested in paragraph 24 of JIC(66) 15?"

3. In view of the urgency of the requirement I believe you will wish to agree that the Note should be cleared out of Committee. Departments are invited to send any comments to the Chairman, JIS (if necessary by telephone, Ext.139) by NOON on TUESDAY, 23rd AUGUST, 1966. Subject to Departmental comments the Note will then be issued in final form.

(Signed) J.P. FOSTER

for Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

19th August, 1966

DISTRIBUTION

JIC
JIS ('B' Team)

SECRET

UK EYES ONLY

Annex to JIC 712/66

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA

Draft Note by the Joint Intelligence Committee

An Egyptian attack on Libya is unlikely except in support of a coup d'etat which was at least partially successful and had invited their support. However the situation in Libya is likely to remain stable so long as King Idris remains in control of affairs, which we expect him to do so as long as he remains in good health.

2. Should the King die or become seriously ill, there is a reasonable chance of an orderly succession. Nevertheless the situation could deteriorate as a result of misgivings about the personal qualities of the Crown Prince and pro-Republican feelings prevalent in certain quarters. However such deterioration is not likely to progress to the extent of making a coup d'etat possible in four days. The need to prepare plans and confirm support from influential elements and the armed forces might well make the period considerably longer. An adequate degree of warning of internal dissatisfaction can therefore be expected.

3. Once the situation had deteriorated, no warning could be counted on of the start of a rising. Should a rising be purely internal, the Egyptians would require time to assess its leadership and chances of success, before deciding to intervene: and this could well take them four days. However if they had foreknowledge of it, or a fortiori if they had inspired and organised it, they might be able to come to a decision more quickly, though they would still wish to see the extent to which it was supported, in particular by the Libyan Army.

4. Once the Egyptians had decided to intervene, the first phase of an attack could develop within twenty-four to thirty-six hours as outlined in paragraph 24 of JIC(66) 15.

5. We therefore conclude:-

(a) at least four days' warning can be expected of a situation in Libya which might lead to a coup d'etat but such a situation could persist for a considerable period without a rising taking place;

(b) once the situation had worsened, no warning could be counted on of the start of a coup d'etat;

(c) once a coup had taken place, the Egyptians would need time to assess its chances of success before deciding to intervene, but this period could be less than four days if they had foreknowledge or had themselves inspired and organised the rising.

RECEIVED
19 AUG 1966
J. I. C.
A.

SECRET

COPY NO 1

DI 4/Registry/859

JIS (2)

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA

Reference DPS 1147/16/8/66 dated 16th August, 1966

Intepretation of JIC (66) 15

1. In our view it is essential that Conclusions (f) and (m) should be read in conjunction with one another. Paragraph 24(a) and Conclusion (m) mean that within 24 - 36 hours of a decision being taken in Cairo to intervene in Libya a force of up to a thousand men could have reached Benghazi (See also para 26).

2. However, Conclusion (f) specifically points out that UAR military intervention is only likely in circumstances in which a Libyan revolution was already well under way. Providing, therefore, that up to four days warning either of UAR intervention, or of a situation favouring UAR intervention, can be given, it would appear that the existing plan is valid. This is discussed further below.

Expectation of Warning

3. This is dealt with under three headings:-

a. Warning of a deteriorating internal situation which could result in a coup, which in turn could be followed by UAR intervention.

b. Warning of an actual coup after the deteriorating internal situation in 3a above has been reached.

c. Warning of impending Egyptian intervention after a coup has taken place.

Warning of Deteriorating Internal Situation

4. The first warning of possible trouble is likely to come from news of the serious illness or death of the King, or of his decision to abdicate in favour either of the Crown Prince or of a Republican Government (which would be Conservative). Following the reported serious illness, death, or abdication of the King it will be possible to give warning that a situation is arising in which a coup, and therefore possible Egyptian intervention, is likely. It is clearly impossible to lay down in advance precisely how long this warning period would be, but we consider it absolutely safe to plan on a period of not less than four days, and probably considerably longer. In any event we do not consider that the situation could deteriorate so rapidly that, from a completely stable situation, with no hint of internal trouble, the UAR force could be in Benghazi within 24 - 36 hours. This is what the literal interpretation of Conclusion (m), taken in isolation, could infer, but it is not what the paper as a whole intends to convey.

SECRET

Warning of actual Coup

5. It is clearly impossible to guarantee any warning at all of an actual coup, once the internal situation has deteriorated to a degree which makes a coup likely or possible. Some warning may be obtained, but this will depend on the efficiency and secrecy with which the coup is planned.

Warning of UAR Intervention after a coup has taken place

6. It would be dangerous to count on a fixed warning period for UAR intervention after a coup has taken place, since it will always be possible:-

a. That the UAR will have foreknowledge of a coup, and may well be involved in it.

b. That, during the period of a deteriorating situation, and in anticipation of a coup, they will pre-position troops in the Western Desert.

However, it is unlikely that they will be in a position to act instantly on a coup as they will probably wait until they are invited to intervene by the leaders of the coup, in order to ingratiate themselves with world opinion, and will need also to assess the current likelihood of British intervention to assist the legal government.

7. To summarise:

a. It will definitely be possible to give at least four days warning of a deterioration in the internal situation to a point where a coup, and as a result UAR intervention, is likely, and probably considerably longer.

b. No guarantee of a specific warning period can be given of a coup once the internal situation has deteriorated as in 7a above, though some warning, in the event, may be obtained.

c. Although no guarantee can be given of a specific elapse of time bweteen a coup, and possible UAR intervention, this period is likely to exceed 24 - 36 hours. However, it must be emphasised that we will not necessarily get any warning of the start of intervention.

8. Providing, therefore, that the intervention plan can be geared to the warning period of a deteriorating internal situation, as opposed to the warning periods of an actual coup or UAR intervention following a coup, a period of four days is a reasonable warning time in the context of para 4 of the Defence Planning Staff letter under reference.

9. Paras 4 - 6 above must obviously be subject to Foreign Office agreement.

10. We believe it is really necessary in order to avoid further confusion over interpretation of JIC (66)15, that Conclusion (m) should be qualified on its own, and without having to be read in conjunction with Conclusion (f). A possible amendment to Conclusion (m) would be to delete the first sentence and substitute:

"Provided the circumstances are suitable (para f above), the first phase of Egyptian intervention could take place within 24 - 36 hours of a decision being taken to intervene".

Area Officer
Area 4

17th August, 1966

Copy to:

Defence Planning Staff
MO 4

Secretary JIC

SECRET

COPY NO 1

31

Secretary
A/Sec 2
Cl 915 A 18/8 B Team
P.C.

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall SW1

Whitehall 7022 Ext 7716

DPS.1147/16/8/66

16th August 1966

SECRETARY, JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

Copies to: Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee
Deputy Directors of Defence Plans
'E' Team, Defence Planning Staff

199/2.

RECEIVED
17 AUG 1966
J. I. C.

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA

We are at present examining (1) a study (2) by CICC(West) of the effect of the plan (3) to run down and redeploy our forces in the Mediterranean to meet Defence Review targets.

2. In their study, CICC(West) refer to the external threat to Libya from UAR postulated in JIC(66)15. They interpret paragraph 24 (a) and conclusion (m) as posing a serious threat of which we could expect only 24 - 36 hours warning and certainly less than the four days warning upon which the Libya plan (4) is based.

19.

3. Our interpretation of JIC(66)15 has been that conclusion (m) should be read in conjunction with conclusion (f), and that the 24 - 36 hour period referred to in paragraph 24(a) concerns the time required to build up a force of two battalions and not the time required to mount the operation. You will realise that a threat whereby we could expect only 24 - 36 hours warning could preclude a reduction in our present force levels in the Mediterranean and might well necessitate an increase.

4. In order to resolve these differences of interpretation it would be appreciated if the following question could be answered as a matter of urgency (the paper is to be drafted on 24th August 1966).

Is four days a reasonable warning time to assume for the type of UAR attack on Libya suggested in paragraph 24 of JIC(66)15?

19.

R.N.G. ALLEN
Group Captain
Secretary
Defence Planning Staff

Notes:
1. DP 55/66(D)
2. CICC(West)/TS2/133A dated 8th August 1966
3. COS 74/66 — m 326/3.
4. JTP(West) No 35

SECRET

SECRET

Reference. R.J. 5545/188/1

50

199/3.

COUNTER SUBVERSION COMMITTEE

AD HOC MEETING ON LIBYA

48-49

Thank you for your minutes No. J.199/3 of 9 and 10 May. I have sent copies of them to Mr. Speares, Head of North and East Africa Department of the Foreign Office.

2. As regards the suggestion made in paragraph 3 of your minute of 10 May, you are, of course, aware that Working Groups of the Counter Subversion Committee consider a number of J.I.C. papers assessing threats on the basis of ~~our~~ W.I.C.S recommendations for counter measures are reviewed. The Libya meeting was the first occasion in my recollection when disagreement about a J.I.C. assessment was raised. I certainly agree that it would be useful in future for me to invite a representative of the J.I.S. to attend any meeting when it is considered possible that some expression of disagreement may arise over any J.I.C. paper. Mr.Copeland, the other Joint Secretary of the Counter Subversion Committee who deals mainly with Commonwealth countries, will take similar action. However it will not always be possible in advance to anticipate whether some members of the Working Group is likely to question the J.I.C. assessment of any particular threat.

J.S.H. Shattock.

J.S.H.Shattock
10 May,1966.

Mr. F. B. Richards,
J.I.C., Cabinet Office.

D/Sec to see, then X
BR
13/5.

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A. 13MAY1966
J.I.C.
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S/F

49

29

10th May, 1966

JIC 199/3

COUNTER SUBVERSION COMMITTEE

AD HOC MEETING ON LIBYA

In my note to you of yesterday's date I echoed Mr. Spearas' statement, at your meeting, that the JIC had no time to consult H.M. Embassy, Libya during the preparation of JIC(66) 15.

2. I now find this is not so: copies of the Preliminary Draft and of the Draft were sent to the Secretary, LIC Libya, in February and the Joint Intelligence Committee put off their discussion of the report by one week to allow LIC Libya and the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean to consider the Draft. The minutes of the JIC show there was consultation (JIC(66) 9th Meeting, Item 8).

3. Perhaps you would be kind enough to let the Chairman, JIS know when there is likely to be a similar discussion of a paper prepared by the JIS? Their presence at this meeting would probably have been mutually beneficial.

F.B. RICHARDS

Mr. J.S.H. Shattock,
IRD
Foreign Office.

Secret

S/F.

48

28

9th May, 1966

J 199/3

COUNTER SUBVERSION COMMITTEE

AD HOC MEETING ON LIBYA

You were good enough to send me a copy of RJ 5545/188/1 in para.8 of which your Committee took note of a number of comments by H.M. Ambassador, Libya on JIC(66) 15 and asked you to bring them to my attention for further action.

As Mr. Spearés explained at your meeting, this paper was prepared for a particular purpose and to a timetable which did not allow us to consult H.M. Embassy, Libya, though they saw and commented in detail on an earlier paper on this subject. I have brought Mr. Sarell's remarks to the notice of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Staff, one of whose teams prepared the paper in question. He has obtained detailed comments from the team and after studying these, regret the one error of fact to which Mr. Sarell has drawn attention but we feel that we would not be justified in asking the Joint Intelligence Committee to reconsider this paper at this stage, though we shall bear the Ambassador's observations carefully in mind.

F.B. RICHARDS

Mr. J.S.H. Shattock
IRD
Foreign Office

S/F 199/3

CONFIDENTIAL

(119/LIC/G)

COPY NO. 23 OF 51 47

26

R4/3.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE (LIBYA)

MINUTES OF THE 96th MEETING

HELD ON 28th APRIL, 1966 AT TRIPOLI

Present:

The Hon. I.T.M.LUCAS	EMBASSY (CHAIRMAN)
Mr. J. L. CHRISTIE, O.B.E.	EMBASSY
Mr. A. E. BELL	EMBASSY
Lieutenant-Colonel B. MCGRATH, M.C.	HQ MALTA AND LIBYA
Squadron Leader G.G.FLACK	RAF EL ADEM
Major L. J. P. MORRISH	HQ CYRENAICAN AREA (SECRETARY)

ACTION

1. (a) The Minutes of the 95th meeting were read and approved.

(b) Matters arising. The Chairman reported that the Committee's reservations on JIC (66) 15 (Final) had been expressed by Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at a recent meeting of the Counter-Subversion Committee, and no further action was required.

199/3

2. The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to the following:-

(a) JIC (66) 24 (Final) - Military Balance between Israel and the Arab World up to the end of 1966 - and undertook to forward a copy of the paper to Benghazi. — Chairman

(b) JIC (66) 6 (Final) - JIC Watch Manual. The Chairman undertook to send this to the Secretary in Benghazi by diplomatic bag. — Chairman

(c) Mr. F. B. Richards, C.M.G., D.S.C. had taken up his appointment as Secretary of the JIC.

3. Draft Periodical Report No. 95 was discussed and amendments and additions approved. The final version is attached to these Minutes. ... R4/3.

4. Next Meeting. It was agreed that the next meeting should be at 1100 hours on Monday, 6 June in Tripoli.

(I.T.M.LUCAS)
Chairman

CONFIDENTIAL

J.I.C. 28 APR 1966

Please initial and pass quickly

Secretary

D/Secretary

A/Secretary 1

A/ - do - 2

A/ - do -

A/ - do -

P.C.

Subject File 199/3

Reports File

Folder

S E C R E T

Reference....R.J....5545/188/1....

46

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RECEIVED
28 APR 1966
J. I. C.

A
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199/3

COUNTER SUBVERSION COMMITTEE

AD HOC MEETING ON LIBYA

I enclose herewith a copy of the record of a Counter Subversion Committee meeting on Libya held on 18 April at which H.M.Ambassador, Libya, was present.

2. I invite your special attention to paragraphs 1 to 8 of the record. In paragraph 8 I was asked to bring this paragraph to your notice for favour of further action by the J.I.C. you will notice that H.M.Ambassador proposed and the Head of N.E.A.D. Foreign Office accepted the need of certain amendments being made to J.I.C.(66)15.

J.S.H. Shattock.

J.S.H.Shattock
26 April, 1966

Mr. F. B. Richards,
Secretary, J.I.C.
Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

Mr. Crick. Chairman J.I.C.

for you, I think

FBR
4/V

Secretary J.I.C.

Please see 'B' Team comments attached. You will doubtless want to discuss on these in replying to M. Shattock. My memory was, it seems, at fault about the draft of this particular paper being referred to Libya. The earlier paper was.

The comments convince me that there is no real case for amendments as the nuances involved and the error of fact is very minor. I think it sufficient that we should take note for any future papers on the area. We should confine ourselves in amendments to JIC finals to matters of serious correction of substance or go in for thorough revision.

It seems to me a pity that members of the IIS were not invited to attend a meeting at which a JIC paper was to be discussed and the Ambassador to the country in question was to express his views on it. Perhaps CSC could bear this in mind on future occasions.

Please speak to Bill Burnham on any further points if I have left. AL 4/5

CODE 18-75

S E C R E T

I have drafted a reply to Mr. Shattock saying that we note the comments, but do not consider an immediate revision necessary.

TBR
9/V

S E C R E T

199/3

R.J. 5545/188/1

COUNTER SUBVERSION COMMITTEE

AD HOC MEETING ON LIBYA

Record of a meeting held in the Foreign Office on 18 April, 1966.

Present :-

Mr. D.J. Speares	F.O. (N.E.A.D.) (in the Chair)
H.E. Mr. R.F.G. Sarell	H.M. Ambassador in Libya
Mr. J. Dodds	F.O. (N.E.A.D.)
Colonel H.N.H. Wild	Ministry of Defence
Mr. G. Lamarque	Ministry of Overseas Development
Mrs. A.C. Elwell	F.O. (I.R.D.)
Mr. D.W. Warren-Knott	F.O. (C.R.D.)
Mr. R.J.E. Thomas	F.O./C.R.O. (J.I.P.G.D.)
Representatives of our friends	
Mr. F.T. Copeland	Joint Secretary, C.S.C.
Mr. J.S.H. Shattock	Joint Secretary, C.S.C.

Mr. Speares welcomed H.M. Ambassador, Libya to the meeting. He invited his views on the current situation and suggested that J.I.C.(66)15 - "The Internal and External Threats to Libya up to the end of 1967" might be used as the vehicle for discussion. Mr. Speares said that since the last ad hoc Counter Subversion Committee meeting held in April, 1964, there had been some encouraging developments. There was a growing sense of Libyan unity and a decline in the prestige of Nasser. Moreover the recent succession crisis brought home the considerable support for the monarchy which existed throughout Libya. A more worrying feature was the growth of corruption and the feeling amongst the younger generation that power and influence was inaccessible to them. There was a need for modernising both the Government and its image, though on the credit side, as the Ambassador had reported, the Prime Minister appeared to be energetically tackling the problem of extending the benefits of the oil revenues to the whole population.

REVIEW OF J.I.C.(66)15

2. The Seat of Government (paragraph 3): Mr.Sarell said that the last sentence needed more spelling out in order to give an accurate picture of the position. Tripoli and Benghazi are twin capitals. Beida in the Cyrenaican Jebel is being developed as a capital, though the Libyan Government's intention regarding it is still not explicit. At present the seat of Government is in the main split between Tripoli (in the winter) and Beida (in the summer) though Benghazi still retains some minor Departments and is also the private residence

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of a number of Ministers. Mr. Sarell said that these facts were important in the context of anyone planning a coup. To be sure of seizing power the plotters would need to secure four places simultaneously, namely Tripoli, Benghazi, Beida, and Tobruk (the residence of the King).

3. Subversive Influences Opposed to the Régime. Latent Opposition to the Régime (paragraph 9). Mr.Sarell said that the statement in the first sentence suggested that the "latent opposition" had some organisation and that little was known about it. However our local intelligence sources are as sure as they can be that there is no organisation

and that the strength of the opposition is accurately described by the adjective "latent". The J.I.C. paper, therefore, required toning down on this. Mr. Sarell explained that the main cause for discontent in Libya was the absence of any opportunity for political expression, the absence of political parties (on which the King is adamant), and the falsification of elections. Until the recent past the distribution of oil wealth was also a cause of dissatisfaction. However, its benefits were now filtering down to the population as a whole. The Government were doing a good job on this. Building is going on everywhere and in almost every large village there are signs of things being done, e.g. the construction of schools. If there should be any future recrudescence of demonstrations and rioting in the towns as, for example, the students' outburst in Benghazi in 1964, it is certain that the Libyan Security Forces, who have no sympathy for the townees, would be pretty rough with them.

4. Egyptian Subversion in Libya (paragraph 10). Mr. Sarell said that this paragraph also overstressed the threat. He made the following points :-

a) There was no evidence of an Egyptian controlled subversive organisation, although our knowledge of the precise activities of the E.I.S. in Libya was still incomplete. There was no doubt that some activities exist.

b) So far as information available in Libya was concerned there never was a plan in 1963 for a coup to overthrow the King. Nor was there firm evidence of the existence of a group of "Free Officers".

c) The teams engaged in the sabotage of Oil installations in 1965 had been rounded up with the help of Scotland Yard. Moreover there was no specific evidence of the existence at the moment of "efficient sabotage teams" though our friends would not be prepared to be categoric that these were non-existent.

d) There were no expressions of pro-Egyptian or anti-Oil Company feelings at the time of the acts of sabotage in 1965. Libyans regarded

/ these

these as an affair between foreigners and of little direct concern to themselves.

e) There was less and less sympathy for Egypt in Libya and Nasser's stock had gone down.

f) Though paragraph 10 of the J.I.C. paper needs modification, it would be incorrect to say that there was no threat at all of Egyptian subversion. The threat was at present unsuccessful. It remained a highly important target for our Intelligence effort which should not be reduced.

5. Communist Subversion in Libya. Mr. Sarell said that there was no Communist threat at the moment. The Soviet Embassy in Libya was officered by beginners. The recent increase in Bulgarian-Libyan trade was on account of the Grain Agreement.

6. The Problem of the Succession (paragraphs 12 - 16). Mr. Sarell made the following points :-

a) The upshot of the recent succession crisis had led to greater support for the Monarchy. The J.I.C. paper was not accurate in stating in paragraph 12 that opposition to the King's proposals for a Republic came mainly from Cyrenaicans. Opposition also came from pro-Monarchical elements in Tripolitania.

b) In paragraph 14 of the J.I.C. paper it is stated that "pro-republican feelings are still prevalent". It is true that there is a small group of politicians who are firmly opposed to the Crown Prince, but the driving force behind this group is probably Mahmud Muntasser whose principal concern is his ambition for the Muntasser clan. The recent crisis in fact underlined the prevalence of pro-Monarchical feelings and showed that at the crucial moment the "Republicans" were unable to rally support whereas the "Monarchists" were.

c) The Cyrenaicans and Tripolitanians are well aware that they will never see eye to eye and therefore would never accept the rule over their respective territories by the other. With increasing Oil wealth there is an increasing desire to retain Libyan unity. The only bond for cementing this is the Monarchy and the Crown Prince.

d) In reply to a question as to what would happen if the King died tomorrow, Mr. Sarell said that the Prime Minister would support the Crown Prince's succession. Indeed it seemed likely that his succession would be assured, no matter when the King died, provided the Prime Minister at the time was determined on his succession. In reply to a further question on what would happen if the Crown Prince were suddenly to die, e.g. in a car accident. Mr. Sarell said that the King's stepson (aged 16 or 17) might be nominated as successor.

/ 7.

7. The Libyan Navy (paragraph 41). Mr. Sarell drew attention to the statement that the Navy "consists ..... of a number of small patrol craft". This was incorrect. The Libyans planned to acquire some patrol vessels over the next five years (the first in 1967). The Navy has none at present. Such patrol craft as the Libyans now possess are part of the Customs and Police organisations.

8. Conclusions regarding action on the J.I.C. paper. Mr. Sarell said that in addition to the suggestions which he had made for modifications to the paper, consequential amendments would also need to be made to paragraph 2 (b), (c) and (d) of the Summary of Conclusions. Mr. Speares said that while this paper had to be prepared to the deadline of the Anglo-American discussions on Libya, it nevertheless contained the best available information in London at the time of its preparation. The much more optimistic view of the Egyptian subversive threat given by H.M. Ambassador, which reflected inter alia the views of our local friends' representative, had not been available to the J.I.C. when the paper was compiled. Libya was a tempting target for Nasser and in the absence of information to the contrary some U.A.R. subversive effort had to be assumed. It was reassuring to know that the threat was less than previously thought (though Mr. Sarell made it clear that it would be imprudent to be 100 per cent confident that no threat existed). The meeting took note of the points made in the foregoing discussion and asked the Secretary to bring these paragraphs of the record to the notice of the Secretary, J.I.C., for favour of further action.

(Action by Secretary with Secretary, J.I.C.)

REVIEW OF OUR CURRENT COUNTER SUBVERSION ACTIVITIES

9. The meeting then reviewed the current use of our counter subversion instruments on the basis of the list contained in the amended Annex to S.V.(64)7 compiled by Sir John Nicholls.

10. Open Information Activities. Mr. Thomas reported that :-

a) The staff consisted of two U.K. based Officers and 12 locally engaged. There are four reading rooms.

b) The B.B.C. programme magazine "Huna London" has a circulation of 2,500 and this will be increased to possibly double in the next few months.

c) Visits. In 1965/66 there were six visitors (3 sponsored and 3 ad hoc). In 1966/67 provision has been made for 5 fully sponsored visitors with the possibility of ad hoc visitors in addition. Mr. Sarell said these numbers were right.

d) The showing of films has been successful.

/ 11.

11. Mr. Sarell said there was no ban in principle on British press correspondents. There was only an occasional ban on a particular correspondent.

12. I.R.D. Activities. Mrs. Elwell said that there was only small scope for I.R.D. work in Libya. They could however exploit targets of particular opportunity when they arose and provide unattributable material (e.g. the Libyans recently asked us for material on the extent of Sino-Soviet Penetration in Africa). Mrs.Elwell said that I.R.D. were also considering some more sophisticated anti-Egyptian operations. Mr. Sarell said that in the light of his remarks already made on Egyptian subversion, it would be best to defer any such operations until there were clearer signs of Egyptian activities. At present it would be a case of beating the air. He was very grateful for I.R.D.'s offer which he would bear in mind for the future.

13. Mrs. Elwell said that efforts to arrange a visit to this country under the auspices of the Ariel Foundation of Salim Shitta, the leading Libyan Trades Unionist, had so far been unsuccessful largely owing to the indifference of the T.U.C. The meeting invited I.R.D. to bring this to the notice of Mr. Foggon, the newly appointed Overseas Labour Adviser, for any assistance he might be able to give.

(Action please by I.R.D. with the Overseas Labour Adviser)

14. It is also hoped to arrange a visit of the Libyan Football Club Hilal from Benghazi to this country in 1966 to play the Finchley Football Club. This would be in return for a visit made by Finchley to Benghazi.

15. British Council. There are Council representatives in Tripoli and Benghazi. The effort is substantial particularly in the recruitment of teachers and lecturers. The Libyan Government are replacing Egyptian teachers by those of other nationalities. Mr. Warren-Knott said that the British Council budget for Libya would be slightly larger in 1966/67. This would enable them to meet all requirements for University posts within the limit of the provision for 26 Posts which now exists. In addition there have been requests from Libya for 30 new posts at schools over and above those already filled. The Libyan Government will pay adequate salaries but various supplementary benefits (e.g. medical, superannuation payments) will require an additional £6,000 from H.M.Government. The Council have asked the Ministry of Overseas Development to meet this sum under the agreement reached in April, 1965. Mr. Lamarque said that he thought the Ministry of Overseas Development budget would be able to provide this (see also paragraph 18 below).

(Action please by Ministry of Overseas Development)

16. Mr. Speares enquired whether the Oil Companies should not be encouraged to give financial backing for the teaching of English. Now that B.P. were expanding their activities, an approach to them might be desirable. The meeting agreed to invite N.E.A.D. (F.O.). to consider this further with Oil Department (F.O.).

(Action please by N.E.A.D.) / 17.

17. Radio and Television. Mr. Sarell said that the B.B.C. World and Arabic Services were well received and much listened to in Libya particularly the news broadcasts. The Queen could, for example, hear the B.B.C. news at lunch time on a transistor set in Tobruk. He had no complaints about the B.B.C.'s presentation of news. In 1967 the Libyans will have a more powerful station of their own which will probably relay the B.B.C. news. The B.B.C. had been brought in as consultants to expand their Service. Television will not be introduced for a year or more. The B.B.C. are likewise acting as consultants.

18. Technical Assistance. Mr. Lamarque said that there was no provision for technical assistance in the Ministry of Overseas Development budget for 1966/67. Mr. Dodds said that it was the understanding of the Foreign Office that £100,000 had been earmarked in the Ministry of Overseas Development budget for 1966-1967. He thought that it had been agreed with the Ministry of Overseas Development that this sum would be available should really worthwhile projects be put forward. Mr. Speares said that as part of normal practice N.E.A.D. would doubtless be informed if there were difficulties over this. Mr. Speares emphasised that the technical assistance effort in Libya was a matter affecting H.M.Government's interests as a whole and interdepartmental consultation about it was essential. Mr. Sarell said that we had deliberately refrained from asking the Libyans for a technical assistance programme since this would have led to a lot of unrealistic schemes being put forward. It was better to have budgetary provision for technical assistance for Libya and for us to come forward with worthwhile schemes, when appropriate, which could be met from it. Mr. Lamarque said that he expected that if any schemes were put to the Ministry of Overseas Development in 1966/67 like those of the teachers mentioned in paragraph 15 above it would be possible to provide finance for them. The meeting took note of Mr. Lamarque's latter statement.

19. V.S.O.'s. They were working very successfully and there were no problems. There were 10 G.V.S.O.'s and 2 cadet volunteers at present. Another 20 were to be sent in 1966/67.

20. Security Liaison and Assistance to Police Forces and Special Branches. At the request of the Libyan Government, an Officer was recruited last year to advise on the amalgamation of State Security and the Special Branches and on their re-organisation into a single country-wide service. We are also awaiting an expected request from the Libyan Government to provide an advisory Mission for the ordinary Police. The Home Office have told N.E.A.D. informally that they may be able to produce a high calibre Mission for this purpose.

21. Military Aid and Training. Mr. Sarell said that the military and naval Missions have excellent relations with the Libyan Services and enjoy their trust and confidence. A close friendship has also been built up over the years between the R.A.F. El Adem and the Royal Palace at Tobruk. The meeting took note of the valuable contribution to Anglo-Libyan relations made by all three Services.

/ 22.

22. Services Community Relations Projects.
Colonel Wild said that the money allotted had not been spent. Mr. Sarell said he would discuss this further with the Service Authorities concerned.

(Action please by H.M. Ambassador)

J.S.H. Shattock.

J.S.H.Shattock
Joint Secretary, Counter Subversion Committee
26 April, 1966

DISTRIBUTION :-

Mr. D. J. Speares	F.O. (N.E.A.D.)
Mr. D. Dodds	F.O. (N.E.A.D.) (3 copies - one for Tripoli and one for Benghazi - together with an amended copy of the Annex to S.V.(64)7)
Colonel H.N.H. Wild	Ministry of Defence
Captain A.B. Webb, R.N.	Ministry of Defence
Mr. M.W. Errock	Ministry of Overseas Development
Mr. E.F. Henderson	F.O./C.R.O. (J.I.P.G.D.)
Mrs. A.C. Elwell	F.O. (I.R.D.)
Mr. J.L. Welser	F.O. (I.R.D.)
Mr. C.T.E. Ewart-Biggs	F.O. (P.U.S.D.) (3 copies)
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- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	
Sir John Nicholls	F.O.
Mr. W. Barker	F.O.
Mr. G. Foggon	Overseas Labour Adviser F.O./C.R.O.
Mr. W. Tomkyss	F.O. (Oil Department)
Mr. R.L. Wade-Gery	F.O. Planning Staff
Mr. F. B. Richards	Secretary, J.I.C.
Mr. M.J. Moriarty	Joint Secretary, C.S.C.
Mr. F.T. Copeland	Joint Secretary, C.S.C.

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MR. W.K. REID

I attach Sir Burke Trend's copy of JIC(66)15(Final), "The Internal and External Threats to Libya up to the end of 1967".

2. This report was prepared to meet a Defence Planning Staff requirement but is also being used by the Foreign Office in discussions with the Americans, due to begin today.

3. The paper concludes that no effective opposition to King Idris is likely to emerge during the period under review if, as may well be, his health remains good. A power struggle between Royalists and Republicans is likely to break out after his death. In this event the Egyptians, who offer the only external threat at present, would be unlikely to intervene unless a revolution were well under way; they would be greatly influenced by the presence or otherwise of British troops in Libya and theirown assessment of the air intercept capability of the RAF. The threat could develop over 24-36 hours and little or no warning could be expected. There could thus be a very grave threat to the small British forces in Libya during the period before reinforcements could arrive.

4. I recommend that I be authorised to pass copies of this report to the Foreign and Defence Secretaries.

P.A. Halliday

(P.A.T. HALLIDAY)

7th March, 1966

Col. Halliday

2 a/m.

8/3

A/Sec/3

Please see on at para 4

Dep Sec

9 March 66

Ministers copies sent 10/3/66

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JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

199/3.

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA
(Previous Reference: JIC 29/66) -18

I attach at annex for your consideration draft terms of reference for a study on The Internal and External Threats to Libya prepared by the Joint Intelligence Staff ('B' Team).

2. I believe you will wish to agree with these terms of reference as drafted and unless I hear to the contrary (Ext.139) by 1 pm on THURSDAY, 20th JANUARY, 1966 your approval will be assumed and action taken accordingly.

(Signed) G.W.W. WADDINGTON

for Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

18th January, 1966.

DISTRIBUTION

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JIS ('B' Team)

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Annex to JIC 73/66

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JIC( ) (Draft Terms of Reference)

1966 COPY NO.

CABINET

JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO LIBYA

Note by the Secretary

The Foreign Office and Defence Intelligence Staff consider that a new report is required on the internal and external threats to Libya, to take the place of the threats as outlined in JIC(65)45 - The Succession in Libya and its Implications for the Stationing of British Troops.

2. The report should assess:-

(a) the health of King Idris;

(b) internal influences opposed to the regime and the degree of support given them from outside;

(c) probable internal developments after the death of the King, including any threat to British forces stationed in Libya;

(d) the size and efficiency of the Libyan security forces, their loyalty to the King and any likely successor, and their ability to deal with internal unrest, and external aggression;

(e) likely external political reactions to internal developments in Libya after the death of the King, especially in the Arab World and the United Nations;

(f) the possibility of armed intervention from any quarter, and especially from the UAR;

(g) the probable nature and scale of UAR intervention in the circumstances envisaged, including an appreciation of the military courses open to the UAR, and the degree of warning to be expected of any UAR attack.

(h) the probable attitude of the Soviet Union in the event of UAR intervention, with particular reference to any action that might be taken by Soviet forces in the Mediterranean.

3. Departments are requested to forward contributions to reach the Chairman, Joint Intelligence Staff by 10 a.m. on WEDNESDAY, 26th JANUARY.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

1966

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JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT TO LIBYA

(Previous reference: J.I.C./895/64 and J.I.C./911/64)

I attach at Annex a report by the Joint Intelligence Staff (Second Team) on the Internal and External Threat to Libya which was prepared at the request of the Defence Planning Staff.

(Signed) J.M.C. VIVIAN
for Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

19th November, 1964

DISTRIBUTION

J.I.C.
J.I.S. (2nd Team)
Sec. D.P.S.
D.P.S. (E Section)

ANNEX to J.I.C./936/64

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT TO LIBYA

Introduction

1. Principles Governing Use of British Forces. The present general principle governing action by British troops in the event of an emergency is to be one of apparent readiness but actual non-involvement in internal Libyan affairs, Her Majesty's Government having no commitment under the Treaty to come to the aid of the Libyan Government in the event of disorders of an internal nature.

2. The Anglo-Libyan Treaty. The Anglo-Libyan Treaty is now under review at the request of the Libyan Government and an interim agreement (which is subject to a satisfactory settlement of all the points outstanding) has been reached to withdraw the garrisons at Tripoli and Benghazi. A smaller force and stockpile will be concentrated in the Tobruk/El Adem area.

THE THREAT

Internal

3. The Internal Position During the King's Lifetime. The unifying influence of King Idris, who is now over 70, is of paramount importance to the stability of Libya, but his grip is likely to weaken as he gets older and opposition to his somewhat autocratic rule is likely to grow in strength and effectiveness. There are anti-monarchical and pro-Egyptian factions in the country now, and also a large number of Egyptian teachers and administrators. These are undoubtedly preparing for the overthrow of the monarchical regime. However, despite Egypt's present precarious economic position and the tempting prize of Libyan oil, we believe the U.A.R. is unlikely to take any violent measures during the lifetime of the present King.

4. The Internal Position After the King's Death. In our view the chance that the present system of government will remain for more than a short period after the King's death is less than even. The country may be split by rival factions with the possibility of a revolt with the revels seizing power over the whole country or only part of it, in particular Tripoli and Benghazi. The U.A.R. would undoubtedly exploit this opportunity by stepping up their subversion and giving active support to the anti-monarchical factions with the object of the movement seizing sufficient parts of Libya as to justify a claim to be the legitimate Libyan Government. At the same time there might still be a Libyan Government under the Crown Prince which would also claim to be the legitimate Libyan Government. This government might request British intervention under the Treaty.

5. Security Forces. The army, which has its greatest strength in Tripolitania, is not very efficient but is

loyal to the King; its loyalty to the Crown Prince is problematic. The police forces are organised in three provincial groups, each of which has a small lightly armed mobile strike force:-

(a) The police in Tripolitania who are of a high standard;

(b) The Defence Force in Cyrenaica which is in effect another Army albeit with only small arms and light armoured cars. It is complete loyal to the Royal family and would almost certainly support the Crown Prince.

(c) The Fezzan Police.

These combined security forces are believed to be capable of dealing effectively with purely internal disorders. After the death of the King an Egyptian supported campaign of civil violence, in combination with uprisings in Tripoli or Benghazi, might lead to large scale defections and switches in loyalty, particularly in the army. The Cyrenaica Defence Force could be expected to remain loyal but would not be able to support the legitimate government effectively except in Cyrenaica.

External

6. During the lifetime of King Idris, and while the present British garrison is maintained in Libya, there is extremely little likelihood of overt invasion from Egypt. However, in the probable circumstances obtaining after the King's death (see paragraph 4 above) the U.A.R. would be likely to intervene if invited in by the rebel authority on the pretext of restoring order. Such intervention would be initially more likely to take the form of small groups (which could be provided from the forces at present in the U.A.R.) arriving by sea or air and assisting the rebels to occupy and consolidate their control of key points e.g. airfields, oil installations and main towns rather than a conventional land based advance across the frontier supported by air and sea forces. In these circumstances Algeria would undoubtedly associate herself with the rebel movement but until her present internal difficulties are resolved she would be unlikely to offer any significant military assistance. We would not expect Tunisia to play any significant role.

7. In the unlikely event of an Egyptian attack across the frontier the forces which could be employed would be:

(a) one parachute brigade which would have to be dropped in at least two lifts, supported by light ground forces, with a garrison force of one infantry brigade and one armoured brigade. This force could, if necessary, be mounted now. A larger force will become available if the expected reduction of the garrison in the Yemen takes place;

(b) two light bomber squadrons and a small number of medium bombers operating from bases in the Delta. At present two squadrons of day fighter-ground attack aircraft operating from Mersah Matsuh but these could be increased if the airfield facilities were improved. Some of the crews would be likely to have had operational experience in the Yemen. An air defence capability might also be deployed forward to Mersah Matruh but would be unlikely to include a S.A.M. element. There is also a small element of light bombers credited with a torpedo carrying capability;

(c) some M.T.B's and KOMAR missile firing gun boats possibly supported by destroyers. These light forces could be used effectively for night anti-shipping raids and attacks upon shipping concentrations in Tobruk and Benghazi. However the latter would require the setting up of a forward operating base which the Egyptians are not well equipped to do. There are also a number of submarines which are capable of some offensive operations in the eastern Mediterranean including mine-laying on a small scale.

8. Warning. In the event of overt invasion, (paragraphs 6 and 7 above) the build up of Egyptian forces for a major attack is likely to give us some warning, but the U.A.R.A.F. could mount a surprise attack on El Adem/Tobruk at any time. In the case of intervention in support of a rebel movement (paragraph 4 above) the only warning would come from events inside Libya and in the worst case this might only be a matter of hours.

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JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT TO LIBYA

(Previous Reference: J.I.C./895/64) -1

The draft at Annex has been prepared from contributions in reply to J.I.C./895/64. These are now circulated for comment to the Joint Intelligence Staff (Second Team) by 5.0 p.m. on TUESDAY, 17th NOVEMBER, 1964.

(Signed) J.M.C. VIVIAN

for Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

16th November, 1964.

DISTRIBUTION

J.I.C.
J.I.S. (2nd Team)

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ANNEX to
J.I.C./911/64

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT TO LIBYA

Introduction

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THE THREAT

Internal

3. The Internal Position During the King's Lifetime. The unifying influence of King Idris is of paramount importance to the stability of Libya, but his grip is likely to weaken as he gets older and opposition to his somewhat autocratic rule is likely to grow in strength and effectiveness. There are anti-monarchical and pro-Egyptians factions in the country now, in particular a large number of Egyptian teachers and administrators. These are undoubtedly laying the foundations for the overthrow of the monarchical regime. However, despite Egypt's present precarious economic position and the tempting prize of Libyan oil, we believe the U.A.R. is unlikely to take any violent measures during the lifetime of the present King.

4. The Internal Position After the King's Death. In our view the chances of the present system of government remaining for more than a short period after the King's death are less than evens. The country may be split by rival factions with the possibility of a revolt with the rebels seizing power over the whole country or only part of it. The U.A.R. would undoubtedly exploit this opportunity by stepping up their subversion and giving active support to the anti-monarchical factions with the object of the movement seizing sufficient parts of Libya as to justify a claim to be the legitimate Libyan Government. At the same time there might still be a Libyan Government under the Crown Prince which would also claim to be the legitimate Libyan Government. This government might request British intervention under the Treaty.

5. Security Forces. The Public Security Force supported by the Libyan Army, is believed to be capable of dealing effectively with purely internal disorder. However, any large scale defections or switches in loyalty by the Libyan security forces, or Egyptian support for civil violence, could seriously prejudice the capability of the Libyan Army to support the legitimate Government.

External

6. During the lifetime of King Idris, and while the present British garrison is maintained in Libya, there is extremely little likelihood of overt invasion from Egypt. However in the probable circumstances obtaining after the King's death (see paragraph 4 above) Egyptian military intervention would be likely under the pretext of an invitation from the rebel authority to restore order. Such intervention would be initially more likely to take the form of small numbers (which could be provided from the forces at present in the U.A.R.) occupying key points, e.g. airfields, oil installations and main towns rather than a conventional land based attack across the frontier supported by air and sea forces. In these circumstances whilst Algeria would undoubtedly associate herself with the rebel movement but until her present internal difficulties are resolved she would be unlikely to offer any significant military assistance.

7. In the unlikely event of a combined services Egyptian attack across the frontier and if the U.A.R. withdraws some forces from the Yemen, which is a real possibility, the maximum force which could be mounted would be up to:-

(a) one parachute brigade which would have to be dropped in at least two lifts, supported by light ground forces, with a garrison force of one infantry brigade and one armounred brigade;

(b) air support consisting of two squadrons of day fighter-ground attack aircraft operating from Mersah Matruh, and two light bomber squadrons and a small number of medium bombers operating from bases in the Delta. Some of the crews would be likely to have had operational experience in the Yemen. An air defence capability might also be deployed forward to Mersah Matruh but would be unlikely to include a S.A.M. element. There is also a small element of light bombers credited with a torpedo carrying capability;

(c) naval support consisting of M.T.B's and some KOMAR missile-firing gunboats. Both could be used effectively for night anti-shipping raids and attacks upon shipping concentrations in Trobruk and Benghazi. However the latter would require the setting up of a forward operating base whish the Egyptians are not well equipped to do. There are also a number of submarines which are capable of some offensive operations including mine-laying on a small scale in the eastern Mediterranean.

8. Warning. In the event of overt invasion (paragraphs 6 and 7 above) the build up of Egyptian forces for a major attack is likely to give us some warning, but the U.A.R.A.F could mount a surprise hit and run attack on El Adem/Tobruk at any time. In the case of intervention in In the case of intervention in support of a rebel movement (paragraph 4 above) the only warning would come from events inside Libya and in the worst case this might only be a matter of hours.

S/F (3)

ask.

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JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREAT TO LIBYA

The Defence Planning Staff are undertaking a review of a possible requirement for British military assistance to Libya (C.O.S.275/64).

2. I attach at Annex the present assessment of the Threat. Departments are invited to comment in the form of amendments to the draft, with particular reference to current events in the Yemen, to reach the Joint Intelligence Staff (Second Team) by NOON, on THURSDAY, 12th NOVEMBER, 1964.

(Signed) A.P. WALLINGTON SMITH

for Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

9th November, 1964.

DISTRIBUTION

J.I.C.
J.I.S.(2nd Team)
Sec., D.P.S.
D.P.S. ('E' Section)

Annex to J.I.C./895/64

THE THREAT

Internal

1. While the most likely time for serious trouble to occur in Libya would be on the death of King Idris, who is now over seventy, there are anti-monarchy and pro-Egyptian factions who might carry out internally, or externally-instigated, subversive disorders at any time. Although the Public Security Force is considered to be capable of dealing with such disorders, were it supported by the Libyan Army, defections on any scale, possibly now and more probable on the death of the King, would seriously prejudice the ability of the Army to provide the essential support. It is therefore possible that a situation of serious internal disorder might develop to the extent that the King or the Libyan Government would require assistance from outside Libya.

2. If these disorders were concurrent with and part of overt aggressive operations, from Egypt or elsewhere, the provisions of the Anglo-Libyan Treaty would apply under which British forces could be deployed into Libya at the request of the Libyan Government. Egyptian aggressive intentions could however be implemented, with little or no warning, through serious, subversively-instigated, internal disorders <u>without</u> any overt, demonstrable acts of aggression against Libya, in which case the provisions of the Anglo-Libyan Treaty would not be involved.

3. In connection with the foregoing it should be noted that -

(a) The present general principle governing action by British troops in the event of an emergency is to be one of apparent readiness but actual non-involvement in internal Libyan affairs, Her Majesty's Government having no commitment under the Treaty to come to the aid of the Libyan Government in the event of disorders of an internal nature.

(b) The Anglo-Libyan Treaty is due to be reviewed in the near future at the request of the Libyan Government, as a result of recent Egyptian/Libyan political developments.

External

4. During the lifetime of King Idris, and while the British garrison is maintained in Libya, there is only a slight likelihood of overt invasion from Egypt. Such military intervention would be likely to take place only in conjunction with internal disorder in Libya, and then probably under the pretext of an invitation from an Egyptian-recognised authority to restore order. The Libyan military and para-military forces alone would be ineffective against such aggression.

5. At the present time Egypt could only carry out an attack on Libya by withdrawing forces from the Yemen, or if still committed there, by using forces at present held against a threat from Israel. As Egypt is expected to continue to provide military assistance to the Yemen on the present scale indefinitely, and since it is unlikely that Egypt will weaken her defence against Israel, the short term threat to Libya has receded.

6. In the, at present, unlikely context of Egypt having withdrawn sufficient forces from the Yemen the size of forces that could be made available would be one parachute brigade, which would have to be dropped in at least two lifts, supported by light ground forces, with a follow-up force of one infantry brigade and one armoured brigade. This operation could be supported by two squadrons of day fighter/ground attack aircraft and possibly two squadrons of light bombers and a small number of medium bombers operating from Delta bases. An air defence capability might also be deployed forward to Mersa Matruh. The Egyptian Navy has a sizeable Coastal Force comprising M.T.B's and some KOMAR missile-firing gunboats. Both could be used effectively for night anti-shipping raids and in addition the KOMARs could carry out night bombardment of coastal targets in east Cyrenaica. Egyptian submarines are capable of some offensive operations including mine-laying on a small scale in the eastern Mediterrean.

7. Any attempted Egyptian aggression would entail a concentration and build-up of Egyptian forces which would provide us with some warning. However the possibility of a tip and run attack on El Adem/Tobruk by a small number of aircraft cannot be discounted.

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Threats to the security of Libya: intelligence reports. November 9, 1964-September 12, 1967. MS Cabinet Office: CAB 163: War Cabinet, Ministry of Defence, and Cabinet Office: Central Intelligence Machinery: Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, later Committee: Secretariat: Files CAB 163/53. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Declassified Documents Online: Twentieth-Century British Intelligence, link.gale.com/apps/doc/LWLKZV766854284/GDCS?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDCS&xid=c507e5e6&pg=2. Accessed 16 Apr. 2022.